

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

CREATING CHANGE



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Acting Chairman Michael Copps
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Robert McDowell

Re: WC Docket No. 09-51

June 3, 2009

Dear FCC Acting Chairman and Commissioners:

The mission of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund founded in 1974 as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Inc., works to build the grassroots political power of the LGBT community to win complete equality. We do this through direct and grassroots lobbying to defeat anti-LGBT ballot initiatives and legislation and pass pro-LGBT legislation and other measures.

The mission of our c3 sister organization, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, is to build the political power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community from the ground up. We do this by training activists, organizing broad-based campaigns, and by building the organizational capacity of our movement. As part of a broader social justice movement, we work to create a nation that respects the diversity of human expression and identity and creates opportunity for all.

In spreading our message and engaging supporters, we have experienced firsthand how the LGBT community benefits from broadband technology. High-speed Internet is essential to connecting individuals with each other and to resources in their communities. As the FCC develops a national broadband strategy as a provision of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we hope that the Commission will use this process as an opportunity to equalize deployment and adoption of next-generation technologies. All Americans should be able to experience the empowerment that can come with a broadband connection.

In recent years, broadband technology has enabled members of the LGBT community to congregate online. We use blogs, online resource centers, and online newsletters to build momentum around our causes. A study by *BizReport*, an online marketing site, found that members of the LGBT community are more receptive to blogs than heterosexuals. Nearly one quarter of online LGBT adults read political blogs, compared to only 14% of heterosexual adults. More than twice as many LGBT adults reported commenting on a blog in the past month than their heterosexual counterparts. In the 21st century, next-generation technology is a vital resource for garnering support on a variety of causes. Through the Courage Campaign, over 300,000 Americans have signed onto an

online petition to overturn California's Prop 8. Broadband technology enables an online forum for political discourse and action.

However, if Americans do not have access to affordable broadband technology, they are unable to participate in an online dialogue. The Internet provides everyone with an equal voice regardless of race, gender, income, sexual orientation and gender identity. The FCC's national broadband strategy should strive to extend this message and provide everyone with a voice.

In recent years, consumer prices for high-speed Internet have dropped due to competition in the broadband marketplace. A Pew Internet and American Life Project study found that monthly prices for broadband were 4% lower in December 2008 than they were in December 2005. In order to maintain affordable prices for consumers, the FCC must adopt policies that preserve the current level of competition. When service providers compete, consumers benefit.

As the FCC creates a national broadband plan, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund urges the Commission to consider the importance of broadband for civic engagement and participation. All Americans deserve to take advantage of the opportunities that broadband technology enables.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rea Carey', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rea Carey
Executive Director